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SETTLEMENT OF RETURNED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS 1914-18

1. NEW SOUTH WALES

General

Special provision is made by the Returned Soldiers Settlements Act for the occupation of land by discharged soldiers and sailors. Crown land or acquired land may be set apart for discharged soldiers and sailors, and obtained by them under the legislation specified, or under the Crown Lands or Closer Settlement Acts.

Special Holding

The Minister may set apart any area of Crown land or land acquired under the Closer Settlement Act or Murrumbidgee Irrigation Act for sale or lease to discharged soldiers or sailors. In order to obtain a block of such land, the applicant must be certified as qualified by a classification committee. The prices, capital values, rents, charges for water (if supplied), and conditions are determined by the Minister, or by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, as the case may be. The holder of a lease under this section, except in an irrigation area, may apply to purchase the same by 15 annual instalments with 2 1/2 per cent. interest, but residence for 5 years on the land is obligatory.

Soldiers Group Purchases

Under the Returned Soldiers Settlement Act, land may be subdivided into home maintenance areas and set apart as a group settlement for discharged soldiers as approved by the Minister. Upon being satisfied as to their fitness and suitability, the Minister may allot blocks on such settlement on prescribed conditions. Within 12 months from the date of allotment right of possession is established, the title commencing from the date of confirmation thereof. Five years' residence is necessary. Boundary fences must be completed within 3 years from the date of confirmation. The capital value as notified is repayable by annual instalments, usually of 6 per cent. thereof, including interest at 5 per cent. Under certain circumstances the Minister may postpone the payment of the first two annual instalments. The third instalment may be similarly suspended, provided that improvements of a value equal to the amount of the three instalments have been effected. On payment of all moneys due, and fulfilment of all conditions, a freehold title is given.

Progress of Soldier Settlement

At the 30th June, 1924. the area acquired or set apart exclusively for soldiers was 9,010,860

acres, of which 1,843,869 acres comprised private land. The number of soldiers allotted farms was 8,819 of whom 1,747 subsequently transferred, forfeited, or surrendered their holdings. The area of the farms held at that date was 8,134,009 acres, of which 6,360,325 acres were Crown lands (including 3,832,930 acres in the Western Division taken up under the Western Lands Act), 1,711,504 acres of acquired lands, and 62,180 acres in the Irrigation Areas.

2. VICTORIA

General

Returned soldiers may take up land under the conditions contained in the Land Act and Closer Settlement Act. The Governor may also set apart any area of Crown land for disposal under those Acts to discharged soldiers only, or subdivide the same into blocks, which may be granted to them on special terms. The Closer Settlement Board is empowered to improve land **(a)** prior to its disposal in allotments; or **(b)** at any time within the first 3 years after it has been disposed of under conditional purchase lease; or **(c)** at any time prior to its being resold after forfeiture to the Crown. The cost of the improvements is, in the case of **(b)** to be repaid in 40 half yearly instalments, and in the cases of **(a)** and **(c)** it may be added to the value of the allotments, or treated as an advance.

Progress of Soldier Settlement

At the 30th June, 1924, the area acquired or set apart for soldier settlement was 2,272,350 acres, of which 1,744,111 acres comprised private land purchased at a cost of £13,214,902. The number of farms allotted was 8,640 containing 2,290,489 acres.

3. QUEENSLAND

Acquisition of Land

The Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, acquire for the Crown, either by agreement or compulsorily, country, town or suburban land in Queensland, whether alienated in fee-simple or held from the Crown under any tenancy or tenure. The purchase-money may be paid, at the option of the Minister, in cash, or in debentures bearing interest at 4 1/2 per cent. per annum, which are not negotiable for 5 years. Crown land may also be set apart as open for selection as perpetual lease selections by discharged soldiers only.

Perpetual Lease Selections

(a) Where the land is unoccupied Crown land or has been acquired under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act as the whole or part of a holding held under pastoral lease or grazing selection tenure or scrub selection, or not acquired under the Closer Settlement Act, the following provisions apply :—1. No deposit of rent or survey fee is necessary. 2. During the first 3 years, the rent is a peppercorn, if demanded. 3. After the first 3 years, the survey fee must be paid in 10 annual instalments. 4. From the fourth to the fifteenth year, the annual rent is 1 1/2 per cent. of the notified capital value, and thereafter 1 1/2 per cent. of the unimproved capital value, as determined by the Land Court every 15 years. 5. The lease is subject to the condition of personal residence during the whole term.

(b) Where the land has been acquired under the Closer Settlement Act or under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, not being the whole or part of a holding held under pastoral lease or grazing selection tenure or scrub selection, the terms are the same, except : - 1. The survey fee is payable in instalments after 5 years. 2. The annual rent during the first 15 years is 3 per cent. of the notified capital value, together with the rate per cent. of the sum, if any, paid by the Crown for clearing, and for every term of 15 years thereafter, 3 per cent. of the unimproved capital value,

as determined by the Land Court, together with 3 per cent, of the sum, if any, paid by the Crown for clearing.

Perpetual Town and Suburban Leases

These leases are not offered at auction, but are open to applicants in the same manner as perpetual lease selections. The conditions of tenure and rental are the same as those for perpetual lease selections by discharged soldiers.

Progress of Soldier Settlement

At the 30th June, 1924, the area acquired or set apart for soldier settlement was 740,824 acres, of which 41,101 acres comprised private land, purchased at a cost of £270,480. The number of farms allotted was 2,000, containing 705,565 acres.

4. SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Acquisition of Land

The Minister for Repatriation may acquire by purchase, either by agreement or compulsorily, land which is held in fee-simple or under Crown lease, for the purpose of the settlement of discharged soldiers thereon. He may also purchase land under any tenure with the view to the settlement thereon of any particular discharged soldier. The Governor may also set apart any area of Crown lands for allotment to discharged soldiers only.

Disposal of Land

Any land set apart or purchased for discharged soldiers may be subdivided into suitable blocks, and offered to them on agreements to purchase or perpetual lease or on leases for such terms of years as the Minister thinks convenient. The Minister may remit, wholly or in part, any instalment of purchase money or rent payable by a discharged soldier upon any agreement or lease granted.

Progress of Soldier Settlement

At the 30th June, 1924, the area acquired or set apart for soldier settlement was 2,790,077 acres, of which 2,106,937 acres comprised private land purchased at a cost of £4,302,942. The number of farms allotted was 3,249, containing 2,779,078 acres.

5. WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Acquisition of Land

Under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act the Governor may compulsorily acquire land held in fee-simple, provided that the value thereof exceeds £5,000, exclusive of improvements, for the purpose of settling discharged soldiers thereon. The Minister may also purchase any alienated land, including land held under pastoral lease or conditional purchase, which a discharged soldier may desire to acquire.

Disposal of Land

The Governor may set apart any areas of land for the purpose of disposal to discharged soldiers exclusively, under the Land Act or under a special form of tenure. When land has been taken up under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, the payment of instalments may be spread over 40 years, and the rate of interest may be reduced during the first 5 years, while payments may also

be deferred for the same period. The payment of rent on a pastoral lease granted to or acquired by a discharged soldier may be remitted for the first 5 years, provided that the area thereof does not exceed 100,000 acres.

Special Tenure

A discharged soldier who has obtained a qualification certificate may apply for a block of land in an area set apart for discharged soldiers, on the terms either of the Land Act or of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, but with the following modifications :—The Minister may allow payment of the instalments of the price of the land, including the value of improvements, to commence not later than 5 years from the commencement of the conditional purchase; and the price, as fixed by the Land Act (exclusive of the value of the improvements, if any, and survey fee), of Crown lands acquired by a discharged soldier is reduced by one half, and any soldier who, prior to enlisting, was a holder of a conditional purchase under the Land Act, is not required to pay more than half the purchase money. This latter provision does not apply to land acquired by the Crown under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act.

Areas Acquired and Allotted

At the 30th June, 1924, the area of land acquired or set apart for soldier settlement was 9,094,711 acres, of which 253,478 acres comprised private land purchased at a cost of £607,215. The number of farms allotted was 1,095, containing 9,094,711 acres. In addition, 3,170 properties with an area of 25,353,775 acres were purchased by returned soldiers with the assistance of the Agricultural Bank, which then takes a mortgage to cover its expenditure. Assistance was also given to 859 soldier settlers who occupied areas totalling 2,789,200 acres.

6. TASMANIA

Acquisition of Land

The Minister may purchase by agreement and acquire or compulsorily acquire for the Crown private land for the purpose of settling returned soldiers thereon in the same manner as under the Closer Settlement Act, with the exception that the minimum value of land which may be compulsorily acquired is reduced to £6,000. Up to £2,850,000 may be borrowed for the purposes of soldier settlement.

Free Grants to Returned Soldiers

Any discharged soldier to whom a qualification certificate has been issued may select under the Crown Lands Act one lot of first-class land (maximum value £1 per acre) not exceeding 100 acres in area, or its equivalent in value of second or third class land. The land is free, but the conditions as to occupation and improvements in the Crown Lands Act must be complied with, and the occupation must be effected by the returned soldier or by a member of his family.

Ordinary Tenure by Returned Soldiers

The Governor may set apart areas of Crown lands or closer settlement land for disposal under the Crown Lands Act or the Closer Settlement Act to discharged soldiers exclusively, and may modify the provisions of those Acts under which the land is taken up.

Special Tenure for Returned Soldiers

Land acquired under the Returned Soldiers Settlement Act may be disposed of by way of sale or lease to discharged soldiers, as well as any land which the Governor may have set apart for the same purpose. This land is subdivided into such allotments and disposed of at such prices

capital values or rents and subject to such conditions as the President of the Closer Settlement Board determines. No deposit is required from an applicant, and where the land is disposed of by way of lease or sale no rates or taxes need be paid for the first 4 years.

Areas Acquired and Allotted

At the 30th June, 1924, the area acquired or set apart for soldier settlement was 329,582 acres, of which 268,209 acres comprised private land purchased at a cost of £2,010,225. The number of farms allotted was 1,935, containing 271,537 acres.

7. SUMMARY

The following table gives a summary of the area acquired, the purchase price thereof, and the number and area of farms allotted in all the States to the 30th June, 1924

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT - AREAS ACQUIRED AND ALLOTTED AT 30th JUNE, 1924

Particulars	NSW	Victoria	Q'land	S. Aust	W. Aust	Tas	Total
Area acquired or set apart	1,843,869		41,101	2,106,937	253,478	268,209	6,257,705
-	7,166,991	1,744,111	699,723	693,140	8,841,233	61,373	17,990,699
(i) private land - acquired		528,239					
.. acres							
(ii) Crown lands - set apart							
.. acres							
Farms etc.-	6,448	8,640	2,000	3,240	1,095	1,935	23,367
allotted - No.	8,134,009	2,290,489	705,565	2,779,078	9,094,711	271,537	23,275,380
allotted - acres							
Price paid by Government	8,060,002	13,214,902	270,480	4,302,942	607,215	2,010,225	28,465,766
for private land acquired							
(£)							

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